



Childhood Connections

November 5, 2024

## Roads to Success

Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals and higher education institutions. Stories from professionals feature achievements from people working in childhood programs such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. Stories from higher education institutions highlight colleges and universities who are using innovative methods to support and grow the early childhood workforce. There are many roads to success. It is important to highlight the varying and unique pathways professionals take and how higher education programs can pave the way. These stories are also available at the bottom of [the Early Connections webpage](#).



This month’s Road to Success focuses on Missouri Western State University, located in St. Joseph. Missouri Western collaborates with early childhood professionals and initiatives in the community including Success by 6, which works to prepare young children for future success.

Success by 6 holds monthly child care director meetings, offers community resources, works with Head Start, and offers trainings for child care providers. Missouri Western and Success by 6 recently opened a lab school on campus to support classroom exposure and community need. Recently, Missouri Western faculty started the St. Joseph chapter of the Missouri Association for the Education of Young Children (MOAYEC) that has organized events for the larger St. Joseph community and participates in recruitment events at local high schools.

Missouri Western also provides an option for students to obtain micro-credentials related to early childhood education. This micro-credential consists of three early childhood courses, and an additional option is offered for students to take an hour of credit of coaching, which allows students to provide coaching in an early childhood classroom. Missouri Western has examined their current degree programs and is working to develop a new child development degree

that supports the program specific needs of early childhood educators, home visitors, and family services professionals currently in the field. They are working to meet the needs of current Head Start teachers working in the classroom who have a desire to obtain a non-teaching credential bachelor's degree.

## **UPDATE! Child Care Subsidy Information**

Income eligibility for the child care subsidy program is based on several pieces of information, including the federal poverty level (FPL). These federal data are updated annually, which can result in an adjustment to eligibility income limits for the child care subsidy program.

The FPL update for 2024-2025 resulted in a slight increase to the family size/income limits, which means a few families may be eligible who were not eligible previously.

The FPL update is effective November 1, 2024, for families who apply for child care assistance on or after this date.

View [the Subsidy Income Limits and Sliding Fee Chart \(November 2024\)](#) or you can visit [the child care subsidy webpage](#) for more information about the subsidy program.

## **NEW! New Research on Parents as Teachers (PAT) Parent Education Program**

A research paper was recently published in the Early Childhood Research Quarterly that shows participation in the Missouri Parents as Teachers (PAT) parent education program is positively associated with third-grade math and ELA proficiency.

This research contributes to the literature on the importance of home visiting programs and is one of the few studies examining the effects of a voluntary, universal parent education program. [Click here to view the full article.](#)

The research comes as the Parents as Teachers Program is celebrating 40 years! This program has an incredible history with the dedicated work of the founder Mildred Winter, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Missouri legislators starting the program in every school district in Missouri. Parents as Teachers made



## **NEW! Early Childhood State Advisory Council Meeting**

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held virtually on Tuesday, January 23, 2025, at 12:30 p.m.

The agenda and related presentation materials will be posted on the [ECSAC meeting webpage](#) approximately one week before the meeting.

## **NEW! Missouri School Age Conference (MOSAC)**

The Missouri School Age Conference (MOSAC) is the largest conference in Missouri designed specifically for school-age afterschool professionals.

The event brings together professionals from throughout the state for high-quality professional development offerings in positive youth development, program ideas, and networking opportunities.

international news through television stations and key educational scientists in early childhood supporting the program.

Missouri has much to celebrate - there are many families and children over the past 40 years participating in the program!

*"The Parents as Teachers program can be considered Missouri's gift to the field of early childhood education, offering the promise of the best possible beginning for every child."*  
~ Mildred M. Winter

### **NEW! Updated Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC) Program Coverage Map**

The CCHC Program Coverage map has been updated for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025).

[The updated map](#) displays the counties eligible to receive CCHC Program services and the participating Local Public Health Agencies (LPHAs) across Missouri that provide services across the state. Pages 2-4 include contact information for the LPHA providing CCHC Program services in a specific area.

For questions or to learn more about the CCHC Program, please visit [the CCHC Program webpage](#) or reach out to [CCHCProgram@dese.mo.gov](mailto:CCHCProgram@dese.mo.gov).

### **NEW! Missouri First Steps System Structure Document**

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is the lead State agency responsible for implementing Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Missouri's Early Intervention system, known as First Steps, includes: regional System Point of Entry (SPOE) offices, a Central Finance Office (CFO), and Early Intervention Providers who work together to provide services to children and families in Missouri.

[The Missouri First Steps System Structure document](#) has been posted and provides a visual of the contracts and partnerships that work together to

The annual event is November 22-24, 2024, at The Lodge of Four Seasons in Lake Ozark, MO.

For more information, please visit [the Missouri School age Community Coalition's webpage](#).

### **NEW! Childhood Strategic Plan Update**

The [2024 Strategic Plan Progress Report](#) and [Goal One Measures Progress Report](#) are now available.

These documents provide a status update on activities related to Missouri's Childhood Strategic Plan, including progress made towards increasing access to high-quality childhood programs and services over four years.

### **UPDATE: Quality Assurance Report (QAR) Rules**

During the State Board of Education meeting on October 22, 2024, OOC staff gave an overview of the QAR framework and presented a proposed rule for QAR, in accordance with [161.217 RSMo](#). In the meeting, the board approved OOC to begin the rulemaking process.

The rulemaking process does not change the requirement that QAR is voluntary and early learning programs may

create the statewide system for early intervention services in the state.

### **NEW! Missouri Quality PreKindergarten Grants**

Another round of [Missouri Quality Prekindergarten \(MOQPK\) Grants](#) are available for eligible local education agencies (LEAs) and child care programs to serve prekindergarten students for the second half of the 2024-25 school year.

MOQPK grant recipients must meet the quality standards outlined in [5 CSR 25 100-340](#).

- Funding is for programs serving children in the year prior to kindergarten who were age 4 by July 31, 2024.
- Classrooms must include children who are at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Classrooms must be operating by February 3, 2025.
- Currently awarded programs may add additional slots.
- Learn more about these grants, including guidance and the application for funds, on [the MOQPK webpage](#).
- Deadline to apply is November 29, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.

For questions, contact the Office of Childhood at [Preschool@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Preschool@dese.mo.gov) or call 573-751-6793.

### **NEW! Head Start Final Rule**

choose whether to participate.

The rule is expected to be published in the state register in December. OOC will notify stakeholders when the public comment period opens in December.

To learn more, [view the presentation and proposed rule](#) from the State Board of Education meeting.

### **TRAINING! Thankful Beginnings Webinar Series**

Missouri Parents Act (MPACT) is offering a training series that helps families of children in the First Steps program or in the process of being evaluated for services.

The training aims to help families understand the Individualized Family Service Plan process and how to be an effective team member.

Webinars will be held throughout the month of November.

[Register for the Thankful Beginnings Webinar Series.](#)

### **RESOURCE! MO ABLE Accounts for Individuals with Disabilities**

MO ABLE is helping Missourians to achieve greater independence and financial security

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), announced a new final rule to strengthen Head Start's ability to recruit and retain qualified staff, improve teacher wages and benefits, and provide consistent quality programming for the children and families they serve.

The new rule, titled Supporting the Head Start Workforce and Consistent Quality Programming, will result in a raise for most Head Start teacher annual wages of about \$10,000. For nearly 60 years, Head Start has provided high-quality early childhood education to children furthest from opportunity.

[Read the press release from HHS on the Early Connections webpage.](#)

### **NEW! Child Care State Plan Waiver 2025-2027**

On October 7, 2024, OOC submitted a waiver request to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). This waiver requested additional time to implement the requirements under the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan for 2025-2027.

This waiver requested more time for activities including pay on authorized enrollment, pay prospectively, and cap family co-payments at 7%, which will require additional funding to implement.

ACF has given states an additional two years (August 1, 2026) to come into compliance with these requirements.

To read Missouri's CCDF Waiver letter visit [the CCDF webpage](#), under the CCDF State Plan tab.

### **NEW! Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Webinar**

OOC staff will be hosting a new webinar series that intends to share child care-specific information with stakeholders and child care providers related to [Missouri's CCDF State Plan for 2025-2027](#).

The first CCDF Webinar will be on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, from 11:00 to 11:45 a.m.

through the power of STABLE Account.

A MO ABLE account is an investment account that allows qualified individuals with disabilities to save and invest money without losing eligibility for certain public benefit programs, like Medicaid or SSI.

Any resident of Missouri who developed a qualifying disability before the age of 26 is eligible for a STABLE account through MO ABLE.

Learn more at [MO Able](#).

### **TRAINING! Coaching Home Visitors: A Parallel Process to Nurture Hope and Growth**

A growing body of research substantiates what early care and education professionals have always known: The relationships between caregivers, children, and families are important.

This webinar series explores how supervisors can use actionable strategies to coach home visitors and principles and practices for coaching families of children from birth to 5 years.

[Register for the Coaching Home Visitors Webinar Series.](#)



Watch for a link and instructions coming soon to listen live.

Learn more about Missouri's CCDF State Plan for 2025-2027 at [the Office of Childhood's webpage](#).

## REMINDER! Health Effects of Lead in Children



Lead infographic - Heavy Metal with Heavier Consequences by Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

There is no safe level of lead in the body and children who appear healthy may have elevated blood lead levels. Children under the age of 6 are most susceptible to the effects of lead. Even very low levels of lead poisoning can cause unseen symptoms, such as behavior and/or learning problems, lower IQ, hearing problems, slowed growth, and anemia. At very high levels, lead causes seizures, coma, and death.

If these effects are noticed in a child, have a conversation with the parent(s) and educate them on lead poisoning. Encourage a blood lead test, and to follow up with their pediatrician.

## UPDATE! Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

An updated dashboard and active child maps for the third quarter of 2024 can be found under Imagination Library Data on [the OOC Imagination Library webpage](#).

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available for every child ages birth to 5 years in Missouri.

A parent or guardian can register their child on [the Imagination Library national webpage](#). Books will be mailed directly to the home of registered children at no cost to the family.

For additional information and to ask questions about the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, visit [DHSS's Lead Poisoning webpage](#). View [the full size Lead Infographic on DHSS Publications webpage](#).

For more information, email [Teresa.Wortmann@health.mo.gov](mailto:Teresa.Wortmann@health.mo.gov) or [Maggie.Burns@health.mo.gov](mailto:Maggie.Burns@health.mo.gov), or call 573-751-6102.

## SAVE THE DATE! 2025 Conference on the Young Years



DESE will host the 52nd Annual Conference on the Young Years (CYY) March 6-8, 2025, at the Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, MO. Vendors and exhibitors can apply for booth spaces at [the CYY webpage](#) and sponsorships are now available.

## Monthly MOPD Quick Tip

Child care providers are required to have a CPR/First Aid certification. If a course cannot be found on the schedule in the MOPD System using the regular event search. Reach out to a CPR/First Aid trainer using the trainer directory to request a training.

After logging in to the MOPD system, use the left navigation and select “Search Trainer Directory”. Using filters, enter a county or select multiple counties, and enter CPR in the Keyword search. This will locate trainers able to deliver CPR and First Aid in the chosen area.

For full instructions, visit [the MOPD Instructions](#) under the topic ‘Search and Register for Training’, step 4. For questions, contact [MOPD@dese.mo.gov](mailto:MOPD@dese.mo.gov).

## Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood

programs.



Photo Credit: Photo credit: Theresa Verslues

In September of this year, the United Way of Central Missouri and Central Missouri Community Action Agency brought together multiple partners, providing two days of Early Childhood Training in Moniteau County at no cost to attendees. Over these two days, attendees earned up to 10 clock hours learning about communication, the power of play, CPR/First Aid Certification, and much more.

Partners at the two-day training included the Department of Social Services and University of Missouri Extension, who provided four of the clock training hours. They presented Building Strong Families-Communication, a training on quality communication with families to build strong relationships and influence children's problem-solving skills, ability to relate with peers, and their level of emotional distress. They also provided a training titled *Power of Play*, where participants learned to importance of play for children's development, developing specific skills, and how to create an inclusive environment for children to learn through play.

Office of Childhood staff were also on hand to inform attendees on child care licensing requirements and the Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) System for those who may wish to become a child care provider. Midwest CPR Foundation provided CPR/First Aid training to those who chose to participate on the second day of the training to earn six clock hours. A total of 13 people participated of the two days of training.

Theresa Verslues, Vice President of United Way of Central Missouri said, "The process to develop and plan these two days took about a year, and we were so excited about the turn out and the attendee feedback. We would like to do this type of training again as well as offer it in other counties. If others are interested in doing similar programs, we'd be happy to share our information."

**UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant**





The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the October 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [September 2024](#)
- [August 2024](#)
- [July 2024](#)
- [June 2024](#)
- [May 2024](#)
- [April 2024](#)
- [March 2024](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

### PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, November 26, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at [Childhood@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Childhood@dese.mo.gov).

### Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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